

in a written update. As a result, he is facing an urgent, complex, and lengthy surgery today to again attempt to repair his torn esophagus. This will be his seventh surgery since last Fourth of July, and it is particularly high risk given his age and his current condition.

By Tuesday evening, the family provided additional updates, saying the doctors were able to find and close the leak in his esophagus. "This is a good outcome—Cooper is still fighting," the family said. The next few days will be critical.

One of Cooper's lungs is partially collapsed, according to the family. His heart rate is elevated, and he is spiking a fever due to a new infection and complications he must face.

Cooper was one of dozens of people shot at the parade. Seven have died. An individual is being held on murder charges in the mass shooting. Cooper and others in Highland Park were shot with a military-style Smith & Wesson M&P 15 semiautomatic rifle. For those who weren't aware, "M&P" in the name of this rifle suggests it is for military and police use. But it was purchased by the individual charged with these murders, who was neither a member of the military nor police.

In an interview with WGN-TV in Chicago, Dr. Ana Velez-Rosborough, a trauma surgeon who is treating Cooper at Highland Park Hospital, said the injuries were "devastating," in her words. "They create very large wounds," Velez-Rosborough told the station. "They basically destroy organs. They destroy soft tissue. They destroy bone."

Cooper received what we call a massive transfusion—enormous amount of blood—in order to keep him alive during the operation. The boy's aorta injury was so severe that a portion of it was removed and replaced with a synthetic graft, according to the family.

The family is praying for a miracle that this little boy survives. We should join them in that prayer, but we need to go beyond that.

Yesterday, Senator DUCKWORTH and I had a meeting with residents from Highland Park who, on their own, spontaneously came to Washington to plead with Congress to do something about these military-style weapons that are being sold in the United States and did such devastating damage to this beautiful little boy. Joining those from Highland Park was a group from Uvalde, TX. They certainly know this story individually and personally. They lost 19 kids at their grade school. They came in with pictures of prayer cards from the funeral parlors. The point they were making to us and to everyone is that this is madness. To allow individuals to have this type of weapon who are not members of the military, not policemen, and to use these weapons on other Americans is unthinkable.

What in the world is America thinking to believe this has something to do with a constitutional right? A constitutional right? What were Cooper's

constitutional rights to go to a parade on the Fourth of July in Highland Park and come home safely? Where was the respect for them? And, of course, when you are discharging 90 rounds into a crowd, it is a wonder even more people weren't injured.

I bring this to the attention of the Senate because—I raised it earlier in the week—I think it is time for us to focus on the reality of mass shooting in America. While this was going on in Highland Park, that same weekend, dozens were being shot and some killed in the city of Chicago and cities across America.

It is impossible for me to believe that we can do nothing to deal with this. The families from Highland Park and Uvalde, TX, were shaking their heads as I explained to them the problems with the filibuster rules in the Senate. Do you think a filibuster rule makes any difference to the family of this wonderful little boy? They couldn't care less about the rules of the Senate and wonder why the Congress can't respond to this clear and present danger in our streets that has resulted in over 300 mass shootings this year so far—sadly, more to come.

I said before when I came to the floor, when I left for the Fourth of July recess, I had no idea that I was going to personally join this fraternity of grief—Senators and Congressmen from cities and towns all across America—who have endured these mass shootings, who then have to sit down with families in tears and explain to them why their Congressman and their Senator can do nothing.

Well, I refuse to accept that. I believe that we can do something. We came to our senses to pass a gun safety bill after Uvalde. I voted for it. It didn't touch the issue of these military weapons per se, although it did call for deeper background checks for those under the age of 21.

I support that, but let's go further and be honest about this. There is no need for anyone to own this military-style weapon, and for it to be sold to the average individual, who has no training whatsoever on the weapon to prove that he is eligible to own it and who can use this weapon under these circumstances which cannot be controlled, is unacceptable.

What would our argument be if someone said: I want to buy a grenade launcher. I think I have Second Amendment rights to own one.

We would say to him: That is ridiculous. Grenades are for war.

Well, these military weapons are for war as well, and I don't believe they should be sold in this country. I believe the military assault weapon ban that I voted for in 1994 was the right thing to do. It was a 10-year ban. We should have extended it. During the period of that ban on assault weapons, there was a lot of controversy, but there were far fewer deaths from mass shootings. It is an indication of the truth of this issue.

I hope that we continue to tell the story of the victims and their families

so that our colleagues in the Senate of both political parties will come to understand it is time for us to step up, accept our responsibilities of office, and protect children like Cooper Roberts.

(Ms. ROSEN assumed the Chair.)

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

Madam President, the Food and Drug Administration of the United States is one of the most important Agencies. It is not one of the largest, but it has the responsibility to determine the safety and effectiveness of more products than most Americans can imagine.

I have been a big fan of the Food and Drug Administration in the years that I have served in Congress. I have seen some wonderful things happen there. They are the ones who decide whether drugs are safe and effective before they can be sold in America, and they have regulatory authority over so many different issues.

But it is sad to say the Food and Drug Administration of the United States of America today is at a crossroads. In fact, it may be in free fall. The Agency's missteps, its close connection with the industries it regulates, its delayed response to formula safety and decisions that fuel the opioid epidemic have shaken public confidence and endangered public health. But the FDA's ongoing incompetence and failure to regulate tobacco products stands in its own distinctive, grim category.

Last month, the Food and Drug Administration announced a long-awaited decision to remove all e-cigarettes produced by the JUUL company from the market after 2 years of scientific review of data that had been submitted by the company JUUL to the Food and Drug Administration. Numerous health studies have determined that JUUL is one of the most popular e-cigarettes used by children.

Let's get down to the bottom line. When the tobacco companies found their cigarettes falling into disfavor, they needed a replacement product. Their marketing proposal and strategy has always been: addict children. They did it with cigarettes. They did it with tobacco products, whether they were spit tobacco or smoking products, and, unfortunately, millions of Americans—particularly children—became addicted to their products.

When those tobacco products fell out of favor, the industry needed a new replacement. They found one in vaping and e-cigarettes. Today, at least 2 million American kids are hooked on e-cigarettes and vaping. If you don't believe me, ask a student in high school or middle school what is going on with vaping, and you are going to be told the grim reality.

Numerous Federal health studies have determined that JUUL is among the most popular e-cigarettes used by kids in America. More than 2 million children in America are using them, including 750,000 kids who picked up these addictive products in the 9 months since the Food and Drug Administration missed a court-ordered

deadline to regulate their products. That is right. The court ordered the Food and Drug Administration to regulate these products, and, unfortunately, for 9 months the FDA refused to do it.

To put a new tobacco product on the market, an e-cigarette company has the burden to prove to the Food and Drug Administration that it is “appropriate for the protection of public health” before they could put the product on the market. That is the law. It makes sense. You can’t sell a tobacco product in America at this point without FDA authorization. And that is what the authorization requires. It has to be appropriate for the protection of public health. Tobacco products can’t prove that, neither can e-cigarettes. But FDA and JUUL ignored this law for years as JUUL sold its products without FDA authorization.

I was relieved when FDA finally announced it was going to ban JUUL’s addictive, kid-friendly products after determining that the company could not prove they presented a public health benefit.

For anyone who has spoken to a teenager, parent, or teacher in the last 5 years and seen the powerful addiction to nicotine that JUUL causes, FDA’s finding makes sense. So imagine my surprise when after FDA Commissioner Califf called to tell me the good news, the Agency a few days later suddenly reversed course. Not 2 weeks after ordering JUUL off the market, the FDA backtracked and halted its own decision.

JUUL sued the FDA. Well, you expect that. These tobacco companies have more lawyers than sense. Big Tobacco loves nothing more than lawsuits to preserve its ability to addict children to their products. Now, FDA and JUUL have jointly asked the DC Circuit Court to suspend the litigation now pending on their products while the FDA resumes its regulatory review.

But here is what baffled me. Health experts and parents across America wonder, Why is FDA in a legal free fall at this moment? One day they are banning the product. A week later they are putting them back on the market. When we need the Agency the most, it is proven to be adrift. And lives are at stake.

JUUL is now free to continue selling its deadly products again, and FDA has not stated how long they are going to suspend this litigation while they review information.

FDA has a choice: rely on science and public health to protect America’s kids or cower to Big Tobacco’s lawyers. Adding to the chaos on Friday—listen to this—we learned that the FDA is neglecting to enforce still another part of the law, which I passed this spring, that clarified the authority to cover synthetic nicotine.

The tobacco companies thought they had found an escape hatch. They wouldn’t have to justify their products if the nicotine wasn’t derived from to-

bacco but was derived from a synthetic source. We changed the law and made it clear that was not going to be a loophole.

FDA sounded the alarm over this emerging public health challenge of e-cigarette companies trying to evade oversight, including the No. 1 e-cigarette used by children today. It is called Puff Bar. FDA has another deadline today to clear the market of unauthorized synthetic nicotine e-cigarettes, and I hope the Agency doesn’t repeat its history of failed enforcement.

The FDA is a cop on a beat. They are supposed to protect all Americans and our children, in particular. They know there is a product on the market that is addictive to kids and leads them into a tobacco addiction. That product is e-cigarettes and vaping. The law says you can’t sell the product until you prove it is effective for public health. The tobacco companies could never prove that, but yet the FDA allows them to continue to sell the product, to ignore the law, to ignore the court order and does nothing.

I don’t know what it takes. I am calling on the FDA to finally come to its senses. If you are going to err, err on the side of public health and public safety, err on the side of kids, not tobacco companies.

This free fall in the legal department at the FDA is unimaginable. It is not safe for America, and it is not safe for our future.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

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Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, at a time of massive income and wealth inequality, the American people are sick and tired of the unprecedented level of corporate greed that we are seeing right now. The American people are sick and tired of paying outrageously high prices at the gas pump and at the grocery store while at the same time oil companies and food companies are making recordbreaking profits.

The American people are sick and tired of struggling to pay for the basic necessities of life while at the same time 700 billionaires in this country became \$2 trillion richer during the pandemic. And income and wealth inequality today is worse than it has been for 100 years—people on top doing phenomenally well, middle class working families fall further and further behind.

The American people are sick and tired of seeing multibillionaires, like Mr. Musk and Mr. Bezos and Mr. Branson, taking joyrides to outer space in their spaceships, buying \$500 million superyachts, and living in mansions all over the world while some 600,000 people in our country are homeless. In other words, we are looking at two worlds. People on top never did better, middle class is continuing to decline, and the poor are living in abysmal conditions.

And in the midst of all of this, the American people want Congress, want their elected officials, to address corporate greed, to address income and wealth inequality, and end a tax system in which some of the wealthiest people in this country in a given year do not pay a nickel in Federal taxes, where large, profitable corporations do not pay a nickel in Federal taxes. And they want a tax system which is fair, where the wealthy and large corporations pay their fair share.

The last poll that I saw had Congress—the U.S. Congress—with a 16-percent approval rating—16 percent. And to me, this was shocking, really quite shocking, because I suspect that the 16 percent who believe that Congress was doing something meaningful really don’t know what is going on.

So what is Congress doing right now at a time in which we face so many massive problems, not to mention climate change, not to mention a massive housing crisis where 18 million families are paying half of their income in housing, not to mention the student debt that 45 million Americans are carrying? What is Congress about? What are we working on right this minute? And the answer is that for 2 months, a 107-member conference committee has been meeting behind closed doors to provide over \$50 billion in corporate welfare, with no strings attached, to the highly profitable microchip industry.

No, we are not talking about healthcare for all. No, we are not talking about making higher education affordable. No, we are not talking about making sure that young people can earn decent salaries when they become teachers. No, we are not talking about leading the world in combating climate change. We are talking about giving \$50 billion in corporate welfare, with no strings attached, a blank check, to the highly profitable microchip industry.

And, yes, if you can believe it—and I am talking to the 16 percent of Americans who have a favorable opinion of Congress—if you can believe it, this legislation may also provide a \$10 billion bailout to Jeff Bezos, the second wealthiest person in America, so that his company Blue Origin can launch a rocket ship to the Moon.

For all of my colleagues who tell us how deeply, deeply concerned they are about the deficit—oh, my goodness, we cannot help working families with a child tax credit; we cannot expand Medicare to cover dental and hearing aids and eyeglasses; we can’t build the affordable housing; Bernie, we don’t have the money to do that; we have a big deficit—well, what about the deficit when it comes to giving \$52 billion in corporate welfare to some of the most profitable corporations in America? I guess, when you are giving corporate welfare to big and powerful interests, the deficit no longer matters.

There is no doubt in my mind that there is a global shortage in microchips and semiconductors, which is making